

## Message Text

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73 60

ACTION CPR-01

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 CG-00 DOTE-00 EB-07 COME-00 L-02

CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 RSC-01 USIA-06

PRS-01 SP-02 SSO-00 INRE-00 /035 W

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O R 092329Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY QUITO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3979

INFO AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL

C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 0230

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OTRA, OCLR, PLOS, EC

SUBJECT: DENIAL OF PERMISSION FOR CRUISE SHIP "STELLA MARIS" TO VISIT  
GALAPAGOS

REF.: QUITO A-121, NOVEMBER 25, 1974

1. OVER PAST SEVERAL MONTHS EMBASSY HAS BEEN IN CONTACT WITH MR. GLENN L. HICKERSON, VICE-PRESIDENT MARRIOTT CORPORATION, IN EFFORT TO BE OF ASSISTANCE IN FACILITATING VISITS TO GALAPAGOS BY CRUISE SHIP "STELLA MARIS" (UNDER GREEK REGISTRY BUT OWNED BY MARRIOTT SUBSIDIARY). IN ALL, SIX VISITS TO GALAPAGOS WERE INVOLVED, TWO EACH IN MONTHS OF JANUARY, FEBRUARY AND MARCH. EACH VOYAGE WAS TO CARRY ABOUT 165 PASSENGERS. PROPOSITION WAS SOMEWHAT OF A LOST CAUSE FROM THE OUTSET IN VIEW OF NEW GOE REGULATION REPORTED IN REFERENCE PROHIBITING TOURIST VISITS TO GALAPAGOS BY OTHER THAN ECUADOREAN-FLAG VESSELS, ALTHOUGH INITIAL MARRIOTT EFFORTS DID PREDATE ACTUAL PROMULGATION OF REGULATION ITSELF.

2. THROUGH SOME RATHER VIGOROUS LOBBYING WITH GOE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE (MOD) AND PRESIDENTIAL SECGEN FOR ADMINISTRATION GENERAL CARLOS AGUIRRE, HICKERSON NONETHELESS SUCCEEDED IN OBTAINING A WRITTEN AUTHORIZATION FROM THE MOD FOR "STELLA MARIS" TO "TRANSIT" GALAPAGOS  
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FOR AN UNSPECIFIED NUMBER OF VISITS. MEAING OF "TRANSIT"

WAS NOT CLEAR FROM AUTHORIZATION BUT HICKERSON CHOSE TO INTERPRET IT TO MEAN THE RIGHT TO ANCHOR OFFSHORE, LOAD PASSENGERS ON TO TENDERS AND TAKE THEM TO POINTS OF INTEREST CLOSE-IN OFF THE GALAPAGOS COAST WITHOUT ACTUALLY SETTING FOOT ON-SHORE. BY NOT MENTIONING NUMBER OF VISITS, AUTHORIZATION ALSO LEFT IN DOUBT WHETHER IT WAS FOR ONE VOYAGE OR FOR ALL SIX CONTEMPLATED BY MARRIOTT.

3. FIRST CRUISE SAILED FROM GUAYAQUIL DECEMBER 31 AND WENT OFF WITHOUT A HITCH WITH "STELLA MARIS" RETURNING TO GUAYAQUIL JANUARY 6. VESSEL THEN SOUGHT TO CLEAR FOR GALAPAGOS AGAIN JANUARY 7 WITH NEW GROUP OF PASSENGERS BUT GUAYAQUIL PORT CAPTAIN DID NOT ACKNOWLEDGE VALIDITY OF MINISTERIAL AUTHORIZATION AND WOULD CLEAR "STELLA MARIS" ONLY FOR FOREIGN PORT. "STELLA MARIS" THEREFORE FORMALLY CLEARED FOR BALBOA BUT, UNDER HICKERSON'S INSTRUCTIONS, BOAT STEAMED FOR GALAPAGOS ANYWAY IN HOPE THAT MATTER COULD BE SORTED OUT IN QUITO AS BOAT WAS SAILING TO DESTINATION.

4. ON JANUARY 7 AND 8 HICKERSON MADE CONTACT WITH SECGEN FOR ADMINISTRATION, MOD AND CNO. HE CLAIMS THAT SECGEN FOR ADMINISTRATION AND MOD, WITH PRESIDENT RODRIGUEZ PERSONAL BLESSING, GAVE HIM GREEN LIGHT, BUT NOTHING IN WRITING. CNO ON OTHER HAND REPORTEDLY TOLD HICKERSON'S LOCAL AGENT THAT HE WOULD NOT COMPLY WITH ANY SUCH AUTHORIZATION FROM PRESIDENCY OR MOD, AND THAT TRANSIT PERMISSION FOR "STELLA MARIS" HAD BEEN FOR ONE VOYAGE ONLY.

5. NAVY VIEW APPARENTLY PREVAILED WHEN NAVY DIRECTOR OF MERCHANT MARINE CABLES "STELLA MARIS" ON JANUARY 9 ORDERING IT OUT OF ECUADOREAN WATERS AND ADVISING THAT LOCAL AGENT WOULD BE RECEIVING APPROPRIATE SANCTION. CAPTAIN OF "STELLA MARIS" (WHICH BY THEN ALREADY ANCHORED AT TAGUS COVE IN GALAPAGOS) COMPLIED WITH ORDER AND VESSEL IS NOW EN ROUTE TO BALBOA.

6. SUBSEQUENT TO LEARNING OF FOREGOING DEVELOPMENTS,  
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EMBOFF DISCUSSED MATTER BY PHONE WITH RESPONSIBLE ECUADOREAN NAVY OFFICERS WHO ADVISED THAT "STELLA MARIS" HAD COMMITTED IRREGULARITY OF SURREPTITIOUSLY SAILING FOR GALAPAGOS WHEN OFFICIALLY CLEARED FOR BALBOA. WHILE THERE WAS NO DISCUSSION OF WHAT SANCTIONS AGAINST LOCAL AGENTS MIGHT BE, EMBOFF WAS ASSURED THAT VESSEL ITSELF WOULD NOT BE MOLESTED AS IT SAILED OUT OF ECUADOREAN WATERS, EMBOFF WAS ALSO TOLD THAT THERE WAS ABSOLUTELY NO RPT NO CHANCE

OF "STELLA MARIS" BEING ACCORDED PERMISSION TO RETURN TO GALAPAGOS FOR PLANNED FEBRUARY AND MARCH VOYAGES. MR. HICKERSON WAS ADVISED OF THE SUBSTANCE OF THESE CONVERSATIONS.

7. COMMENT: WE CONCLUDE FROM THE FOREGOING THAT GOE IS FIRM IN ITS INTENTION TO FORBID FOREIGN-FLAG PLEASURE VISITS TO GALAPAGOS AND RECOMMEND THAT SUBSTANCE OF REGULATIONS REPORTED IN THE AIRGRAM UNDER REFERENCE BE DISSEMINATED TO MARINERS IN WHATEVER WAY THE DEPARTMENT CONSIDERS APPROPRIATE.  
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